



Supersonic Particle Deposition Technology for Repair of Magnesium Aircraft Components

Project Initiated in March 2006

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| Report Documentation Page | | | | Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188 | |
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| 1. REPORT DATE JAN 2007 | | 2. REPORT TYPE | | 3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2007 to 00-00-2007 | |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Supersonic Particle Deposition Technology for Repair of Magnesium Aircraft Components | | | | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5b. GRANT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER | |
| 6. AUTHOR(S) | | | | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5e. TASK NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER | |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Research Laboratory, 4555 Overlook Ave., SW , Washington, DC, 20375 | | | | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER | |
| 9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) | | | | 10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) | |
| | | | | 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) | |
| 12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited | | | | | |
| 13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES 27th Replacement of Hard Chrome and Cadmium Plating Program Review Meeting, January 23-25, 2007, New Orleans, LA. Sponsored by SERDP/ESTCP. | | | | | |
| 14. ABSTRACT | | | | | |
| 15. SUBJECT TERMS | | | | | |
| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: | | | 17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR) | 18. NUMBER OF PAGES 12 | 19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| a. REPORT unclassified | b. ABSTRACT unclassified | c. THIS PAGE unclassified | | | |

Use of Magnesium Alloys

- *Magnesium alloys used throughout the aircraft industry for applications such as gearboxes on helicopter transmissions and gas turbine engines*
- *Use of magnesium alloys expected to increase due to favorable properties:*
 - *40% lighter than steel and 20% lighter than aluminum on a like-for-like strength ratio*
 - *Good damping qualities, absorbing noise and vibration*
 - *Low density means easier, faster machining of components*
 - *High thermal conductivity and good EMI shielding*
 - *Ductile, with ideal casting properties; can be molded into large, thin-walled components at near net shape*
- *Current usage and future increased usage impacted by high reactivity and susceptibility to corrosion (especially galvanic corrosion); relatively soft and susceptible to scratching; adhesion problems of coatings*

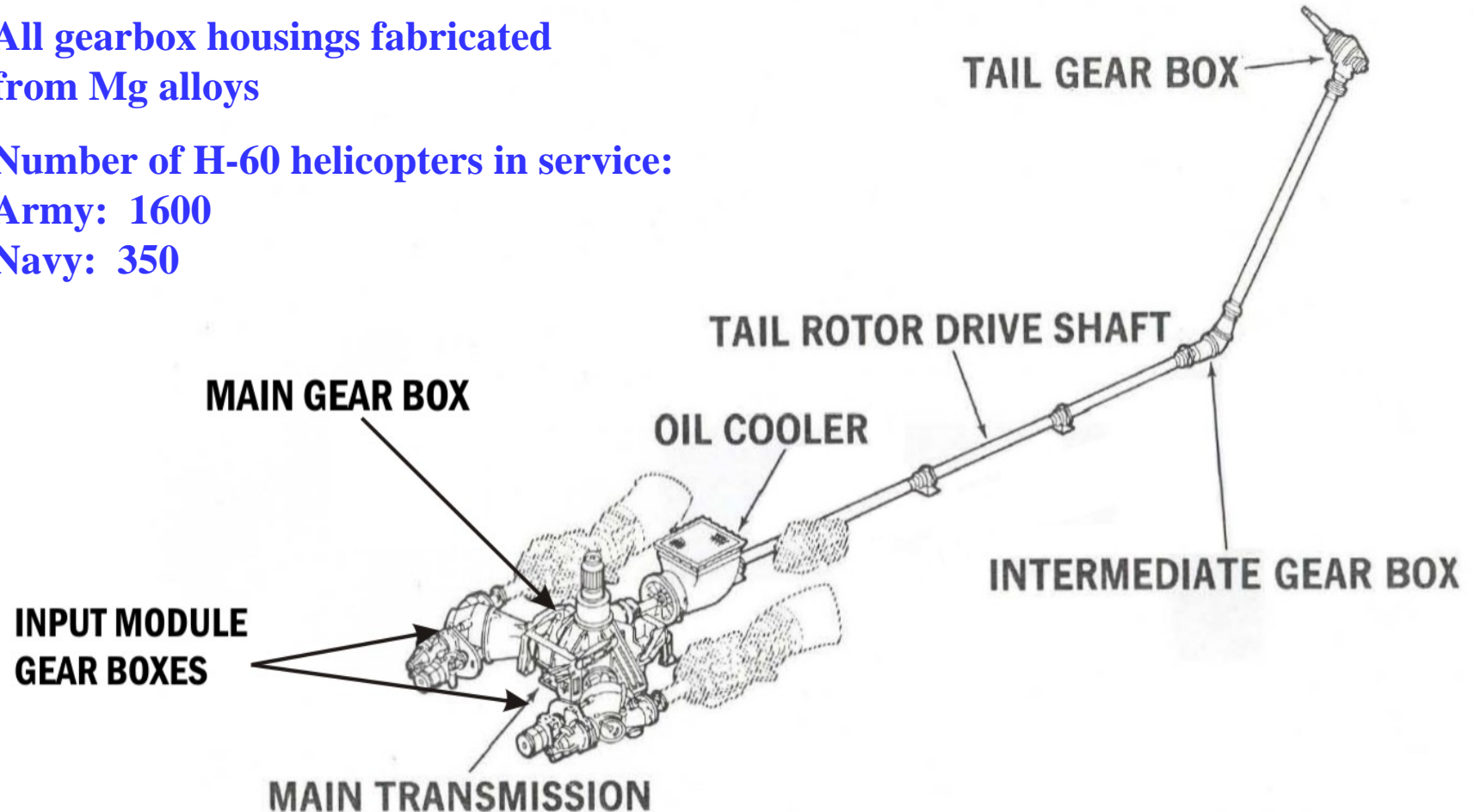
H-60 Transmission System Powertrain

All gearbox housings fabricated
from Mg alloys

Number of H-60 helicopters in service:

Army: 1600

Navy: 350



Current Methods for Providing Surface Protection to Magnesium Alloy Components

- *For OEMs such as Sikorsky, surface is hard anodized using the Dow 17 process followed by application of a phenolic resin; for non-mating surfaces, chromate epoxy polyamide primer followed by epoxy paint are applied; for mating surfaces, sealant compounds are used*
- *For repair depots, surface corrosion protection provided by AMS-M-3171 (formerly MIL-M-3171) followed by phenolic resin and primer/paint for non-mating surfaces and sealant for mating surfaces*
- *Dow 17 and AMS-M-3171 processes both involve use of sodium dichromate containing hexavalent chromium; operations will be severely affected if new OSHA Cr(VI) PEL is implemented*

Magnesium Alloy Components on Joint Strike Fighter

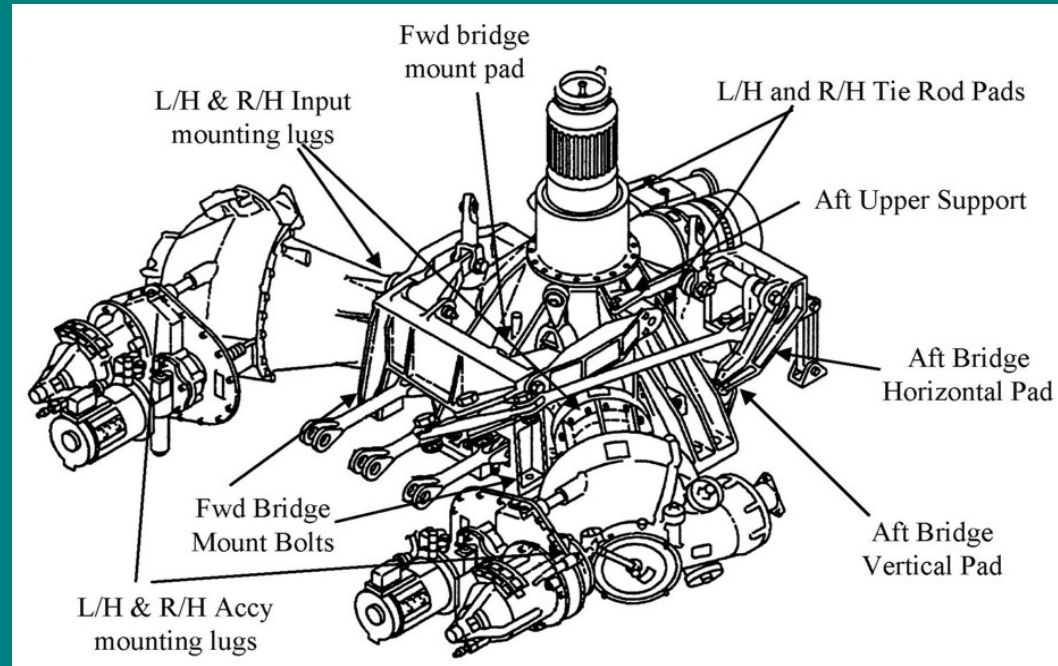
- *Four Mg components in power system*
 - *Generator housing in Power and Thermal Management System*
 - *Lube pump housing, oil tank, and engine start generator housing in Electrical Power System*
- *Dow 17 would normally be used on these components but chromates are on JSF Restricted Materials List; therefore, JSF intends to investigate alternative surface protection processes*



Power and Thermal Management System magnesium alloy generator housing

Performance Problems With Current Surface Treatment Methods

- *Even with chromated surface treatments, Mg components suffer severe degradation in service*
- *Most corrosion occurs at mating pads, supports, and mounting lugs where dissimilar metal is in contact with Mg; damage is most likely to occur in those locations as well*



H-60 Main Transmission Housing showing areas most susceptible to corrosion

Corrosion on H-53 Tail Gearbox Housing



Project Description

- *Objective:* *Demonstrate and qualify SPD aluminum alloy coatings as a cost-effective, ESOH-acceptable technology to provide surface protection and a repair/rebuild methodology for Mg alloy components on Army and Navy helicopters and advanced fixed-wing aircraft such as the Joint Strike Fighter*
- *Technology Description:* *SPD, also called cold spray, involves the introduction of a heated high-pressure gas such as He or N₂ together with 1- to 50-μm-diameter particles of a metal or alloy into a gun containing a nozzle designed such that the gas exits at supersonic velocities ranging from 400 to 1000 meters-per-second, considerably higher than those achieved by any thermal spray process*

Because temperature of gas generally ranges from 200° to 400° C, no melting of particles takes place, plus there is no oxidation or decomposition of deposited particles

Project Execution

Project divided into six separate tasks as follows:

- ***Task 1: Acquisition of SPD system and installation into Fleet Readiness Center – East (Cherry Point); training of personnel; performing demonstration depositions (Note: CGT System purchased through ASB Industries; delivery expected in April 2007)***
- ***Task 2: Selection of optimum Al alloy/composite coatings; initial coatings to be investigated include:***
 - *Commercially pure Al*
 - *Al-12Si*
 - *5000 series Al alloy*

Optimum coating determined through microstructure, adhesion, and limited electrochemical/B117 corrosion testing
- ***Task 3: Demonstration Plan, including development and execution of Materials Joint Test Protocol (JTP)***

Project Execution

- *Task 3 (continued):* *Following types of tests anticipated to be required for JTP*
 - *Electrochemical corrosion testing including anodic polarization and galvanic corrosion*
 - *ASTM B117 neutral salt fog and G85, Annex 4, SO₂ salt fog tests on intact and scribed Al-coated Mg panels*
 - *Crevice corrosion tests using Sikorsky protocol*
 - *Field corrosion testing of coated panels on test racks on Navy aircraft carrier*
 - *Fretting fatigue tests using UTRC equipment*
 - *Impact and scratch-resistance testing*
- *Task 4:* *Technology transition and insertion*
 - *Establish procedures for coating deposition on candidate components*
 - *Establish surface prep and post-deposition finishing procedures*

Project Execution

■ Task 5: *Cost and environmental evaluations*

- *Cost/benefit analysis for application of SPD AI on all relevant components at NADEP-CP*
- *Implementation assessment by Rowan Technology Group for full insertion of SPD technology at NADEP-CP and CCAD*

■ Task 6: *Program Management*

- *Preparation and submission of Demonstration Plan (incl. JTP)*
- *Preparation and submission of Final Report*

Expected DOD Benefit

- *Proposed project differs from, for example, project to replace EHC plating with HVOF coatings in that the performance of EHC was considered acceptable but there were ESOH issues*
- *In proposed project, performance of current multi-step process is unacceptable, leading to rejection of many Mg housings at a very high cost*
- *Benefits of proposed project are derived from:*
 - *Contributing to elimination of Dow 17 and AMS-M-3171 processes involving Cr(Vi), a high priority due to pending PEL*
 - *Providing additional corrosion protection to critical areas on Mg housings, resulting in longer life, leading to fewer rejections during overhaul*
 - *Ability to reclaim previously rejected housings*
 - *Potential of using portable SPD units to provide repairs in field, thereby reducing requirements for replacement and return of damaged components to depot*

Project Sponsors

ESTCP

Army

Joint Strike Fighter Program

Navy ManTech Program

Total of ~ \$3.5 million committed over three years

Army funding will generally support ARL's coating development work, portion of execution of Materials JTP, demonstration of coating application on Army components, and CCAD/AMCOM involvement in project

JSF funding will support DSTO (with sub to ARL) in coatings development and materials testing for F-35 gearbox housings

Navy ManTech funding will generally support Applied Research Lab at Penn State (ARL-PS) for coatings development, training of NADEP-CP personnel, and demonstrations of coating application on Navy components